

Caring Families



# Caring Families Coalition

713 Main St. Rear Bldg.  
Willimantic CT 06226

Phone: 860-539-6151

Fax: 860-524-0738

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## CONNECTICUT LEGISLATURE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING January 31, 2007

Donna M. Bronwell  
699 Bailey Hill Road, PO Box 106, East Killingly, CT 06243

860-779-1164

I am submitting this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 1 with the request that the legislature ensure affordable, quality health care for all residents.

As some background, I have been employed for 47 years, worked since I was 16 years old, married have two adopted children who are now responsible employed adults, plus three grandchildren.

I am one of those good solid working citizens, who also uses volunteer time to make the community a better place. Currently I am involved in Children's Law Center and spend lots of time on environmental issues as the chair of our local Conservation Commission in Killingly.

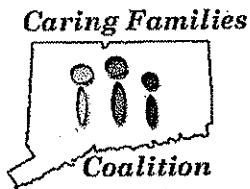
In November my full time job ended, and I now join the thousands who are not covered by health insurance.

I fall in the category of "not old enough for Medicare, and can't afford to buy medical insurance."

In my employment over the past 15 years as Employment Counselor, I worked with many, many folks who were either between jobs, employed part time, or needed help to upgrade their skills and income. Invariably, the lack of secure ongoing health coverage was a major worry.

Those that have children were able to get coverage through the Husky Plan. For everyone else, there was no health safety net. Some were single young adults, but many were older single or married individuals who were struggling financially, but in no way could afford medical insurance.

Yes, there is the possibility of buying into the past employer's medical plan under the COBRA regulations, but the cost is unaffordable. For myself, my unemployment income is \$300/ week, and medical insurance cost for me alone would be \$500/month. Fortunately,



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*Donna Bronwell, Page 2 of 2.*

my husband is covered under the Veterans, or the monthly cost to cover us both would be \$1200/month. Like many, I take the risk of no insurance, and try to stay healthy.

It's time we as a society provided health coverage for all our citizens. As the most advanced and richest country in the world, it is sinful that we have not placed health care for all as a top priority.

We need HEALTH care, not only sick care. Prevention and maintenance care can reduce costs down the road. Some need medications to keep functioning adequately, so they can move ahead in life. Rather than waiting for people to get really sick and go to the emergency room, let's provide that basic care.

I believe the whole health care system needs overhauling, but for a first step let's get basic coverage for all who are not insured. This could cover the young adults, those working only part time, those between jobs, middle aged folks who can't get full time jobs with benefits, those not disabled but need maintenance medications, and people not old enough for Medicare.

I urge lawmakers, the medical community and citizens to take bold steps.

Create a comprehensive health care system that provides coverage for all, one that provides at least minimal security that basic health needs will be met, and eliminates the fear, stress and tension of not having a medical safety net.

Tinkering with the system with tax deductions, as the president proposed, will not solve the problem.

Let's recreate and rebalance our priorities.

Let's stop subsidizing profit-making corporations and begin funding health care for all our citizens.